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PILLAR WORK

BY RICHARD BURTON

“And upon the top of the pillars was lily-work; so was the work of the Pillars finished.”—I Kings, VII, 22.

AMONG the flowers, the lily blooms supreme
For light and loveliness; her odorous breath
Floats like the memory of some delicate dream,
After her body has gone down to death.
Of garden growths she is the fairest one;
She crowned the Temple built by Solomon.

Behold the task completed! Marble strength
And ornament of precious stone were there,
But, for to make it lovelier, at length
They wrought a work of lilies, passing fair,
And set it high atop, like a great gem
To glow and glitter in Jerusalem.

The strength that flowers in Beauty is twice strong.
Four-square the Temple stood; but when the eye
Looked cloudward, lo, like to a lofty song,
The lily-work made glad the Orient sky;
And all the worshipers grew hushed, and peace
Fell on their hearts, and heavenly release.

RICHARD BURTON.